

CUHK Convocation Study Improvement Awards 2021/22
香港中文大學校友評議會學業進步獎 2021/22

Name 姓名	Tong Chin Wai Chie
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Major 主修	Law
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When it came to studies, I have never been particularly organized. My motivation to work hard came in occasional bursts. Sometimes, I would attend all the classes and try to be a model student, then I would slack off for some weeks, and dread the tally of lectures I have yet to catch up on. Unsurprisingly, my grades were mediocre.

However, I reached a major turning point during the middle of my degree. Due to some things I was going through at the time, I was depressed and not functional for a long period. Adding on to this, I was becoming uninterested in my major. This led to some staggeringly poor performance. Luckily, this was the event that gave me clarity and direction. Two things I did helped me tremendously: Understanding how I perceive information and process them; changing my lifestyle and focusing attention on myself.

The first item was directly related to the way I study. Ever since high school, I would try to mimic friends who performed well in terms of study methods. For example, I would go over all the material, highlight important parts, then summarise them in my notes. Why did this work for them but not for me? What would work for me? To understand what works for me, I had to know how I processed and learned new information in the first place. I realised I learn best by engaging spontaneously yet thoughtfully with the course material. This included always asking myself why a law operates this way. After a seemingly disorganised brainstorming session, I would then slowly connect the dots to form a theoretical structure that made sense to me. This was the only way I could truly internalise the course material, and it stems from the way I function outside of my studies. As for lifestyle changes, this is more straightforward – when I take care of my physical and mental health, I am a lot more productive, and more resilient in the face of challenges. I occasionally meditate, try to cook often, and avoid a sedentary lifestyle.

As I did these two main things, my academic performance improved. I did not adopt a tunnel vision mentality where my sole goal was to improve my grades. Rather, it was a gradual change in mindset, both with regards to studying law and my life in general. It was a great experience.

Finally, I would like to thank the CUHK Convocation for giving me this award. The award money will lessen my financial burden, and will motivate me to continue working hard.



A photoshoot with my Undergraduate Law Society committee members in preparation for the summer freshmen orientation camp. (4th from the left)



Travelling around near Tsinghua University with my friends. (2nd from the left)